



Task Force Falcon

# Falcon Flier



Volume 3, Issue 7

Produced for the personnel of Task Force Falcon

October 15, 2000



## Russian-American helicopter exchange takes off

*Story and Photos by Spc. Gary Goodman*

A little more than 10 years ago during the Cold War, most people thought that the only place that U.S. and Russian attack helicopters would meet would be on the field of battle. But times change. And today, Russian and American personnel work together toward the common goal of providing a safe environment for the children of Kosovo to grow up in.

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Read the Falcon Flier online at [www.tffalcon.hqusareur.army.mil](http://www.tffalcon.hqusareur.army.mil)

## General attends new TMK barracks opening



On October 11, Brigadier General Dennis Hardy addressed more than a thousand civilians, TMK members and distinguished guests during a ribbon cutting ceremony at the new TMK barracks in Ferizaj/Urosevac. In his remarks, Hardy mentioned all of the great civic works the TMK was involved in; the rebuilding of a school fence in Kamenica, the repaving of the road to Gjilane and training in civil disaster work. All these contributions will help make Kosovo's future even brighter.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that you can also view the *Falcon Flier* online, too? That's right just log on to the Task Force Falcon Web site at [www.tffalcon.hqusareur.army.mil](http://www.tffalcon.hqusareur.army.mil) and click on the Falcon Flier link and there they are! The issues are in pdf format and can be downloaded directly to your computer. Every page is in full color and you can even print it out of your printer. Issues are generally posted on the 1st and 15th of the month.

## MISSING:

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Soldiers are encouraged to return videos as soon as possible.

Remember: You are denying other soldiers the use of those videos. So dig through your piles of video tapes and games and return them to the Red Cross. Contact the

Red Cross at 781-5012

## WANTED

The Falcon Flier wants your stories -- award ceremonies, events, activities, or human interest news. All units from Camps Bondsteel, Able Sentry and Monteith are invited to submit information for publication. While we may not be able to run every story due to space limitations, we would like to hear from you.

Please feel free to contact the Task Force Falcon Public Affairs Office with your ideas, news and comments at:  
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### Russian-American helicopter exchange takes off continued from Page 1

In the spirit of this brotherhood, the soldiers of Task Force "Knightmare", 2/501<sup>st</sup> Avn. Bn., invited Russian soldiers of the 28<sup>th</sup> Attack Helicopter Group to bring their transport and attack helicopters to Camp Bondsteel on Oct. 6 for an international "show and tell".

Twenty-eight Russian officers, who brought their MI-8 transport helicopter and MI-24 Hind combat helicopter for American soldiers to examine, answered the invitation. Likewise, the Russians were afforded the opportunity to look over the American helicopters used here in Task Force Falcon, including the Apache, Blackhawk and Kiowa Warrior. They also received briefings by American pilots on the mission capabilities of each aircraft.

"We started them off with a very small briefing about what my battalion Task Force has, what we bring to MNB-E, what our soldiers do and how our soldiers live," said Lt. Col. Tom Muir, commander of Task Force "Knightmare". "It was a great opportunity for them to learn how our soldiers work on our aircraft and how our soldiers are taken care of here at Bondsteel."

"We then took them out and showed them each of our aircraft, and fired up our systems for them. We took them through our clamshells so they can see our phase teams hard at work in maintaining our aircraft. They were amazed at our crew chiefs and our maintenance capability. They were just bowled over with the ability of our soldiers to keep these aircraft flying," said Muir.

After the tour of the clamshells, the Russians were taken to the southtown dining facility for lunch, and of course, to the PX.

"Then we brought the U.S. soldiers to come out and look at their helicopters, the MI-24 and MI-8. I think the MI-24 stole the show though with a lot of attention," Muir said.

The Hind received constant attention from the time it landed on the helipad in the morning until the time the Russians departed at 1600 hours. It's not hard to imagine why. The Hind is a massive helicopter capable of an impressive bomb load. According to the Commander of the Russian contingent in Kosovo, Col. Railyan Aleksander, the Hind is equipped with a 30mm machine gun,



*A Russian MI-24 Hind attack helicopter screams through the skies above Camp Bondsteel*

and is capable of carrying missiles, rockets and bombs with a 1,500 kg bomb load, or 3,300 lbs. Also, the machine gun is capable of churning out 3,000 rounds per minute.

Each of the MI-24's engines produces up to 2,600 horsepower, capable of propelling the helicopter at speeds of 345 km/hr, or 555 mi/hr.

"But I'm sure that this helicopter should not be used as a combat helicopter here in Kosovo," said Aleksander. "The MI-8 and Blackhawk helicopters are much more important on this peacekeeping mission than the Apache or MI-24."

The MI-8 transport helicopter is the same one used by the Ukrainians on Camp Bondsteel. It is capable of carrying up to 24 personnel, with the 2,200 horsepower engines providing it with a maximum load of 1,300 kg, or 2,860 lbs.

This type of helicopter is frequently used here in sector, transporting military personnel safely and quickly above the dangerous roads of Kosovo.

At the end of the day when the soldiers were done perusing each other's aircraft, Muir had a once in a lifetime opportunity...to fly the MI-24.

"It was a blast, I never in my life thought that I would get an experience like that, to get to fly an MI-24 Hind. Unbelievable. What a great aircraft," he said, exuding the excitement he felt at the experience.

Although Muir was afforded the opportunity to fly the Hind, that was not the reason for inviting the Russians to Bondsteel.

"We invited them here so we can show off a little bit. We wanted to

show how U.S. soldiers take care of our equipment, take care of each other and how we operate as a Task Force," said Muir.

"I think they gained a great appreciation - not just for how vast Bondsteel is, or the capabilities and technology of our aircraft - but for the way the U.S. Army and 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division does business. I think they came away very impressed."



*Lt. Col. Tom Muir, commander of TF "Knightmare" 2/501<sup>st</sup> AVN, receives commo instructions prior to his test flight of the MI-24*



*Russian pilots speak with Chief Warrant Officer 2 Peter A. Hernandez about the instruments found inside the cockpit of the Hind*



# Polish-Ukrainians get Medevac training

Story and Photos

by Spc. Michael Nowinski

Imagine disaster striking your group, leaving most of your close comrades severely wounded. You call for a medevac, but the only help you can find is from another country, and you don't know the procedures. You probably can't speak the language, either. Lacking this type of knowledge in a multinational environment like Kosovo could put your wounded soldiers – as well as the rest of your troops – in jeopardy.

This is the kind of event that the Polish-Ukrainian Battalion and members of Task Force Falcon were training to avoid. In early October, medics and doctors from the Polish-Ukrainian battalion received lessons at the Polish-Ukrainian White Eagle Camp from U.S. medical liaison coordinators and Camp Bondsteel's 45<sup>th</sup> Medevac air ambulance group.

The training was comprehensive, covering everything from calling in a medevac request and safely approaching medevac aircraft to a quick English lesson. Safety around the aircraft was emphasized, since a helicopter's rotating blades are always a hazard, especially to those not used to working around the craft.

"A lot of people tend to hang around the helicopter and not pay attention to what's going on and they may walk into something they don't want to," said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Todd Thelin, a 45<sup>th</sup> Medevac "Dustoff" pilot.

With Bondsteel's Task Force Med Falcon being the closest emergency medical facility to the Polish-Ukrainian camp, mass casualty training like this was necessary. "If

this unit ever wanted to call in a medevac, they're prepared to set up an LZ, call us in and give us the appropriate information that we need," said Thelin. They also learned how to move to and from a helicopter when it actually lands so they don't jeopardize the patient they're trying to help.

After the six hour lesson the day before, the class of medics started the next day by dressing some of their fellow soldiers in fake wounds and tying them down to gurneys to prepare for a medevac. As "Dustoff" stood by, the soldiers of the Polish-Ukrainian battalion used their new knowledge to call in a nine-line medevac. Soon after, the Blackhawk came in for a smooth landing and the Polish-Ukrainian medics - with gurneys in hand - walked briskly, efficiently and safely to the helicopter to evacuate the "injured". After the aircraft was full, they closed the door and sent their comrades on their way.

Mistakes were made during the training, but that was the place to make them said Polish army physician, Capt. Darivsz Coral. "Exercises like this are very useful... these exercises are worth it to do in the future because when we practice, we'll be ready to do our jobs all the time," he said.

With a whole day of training and enthusiastic students, the medical



Polish-Ukrainians load a 'victim' into a dustoff chopper for medevac

liaison coordinator to the Polish battalion, Staff Sgt. Mark Baugher, said the training went off great.

"What made this exercise a success was the motivation of the Polish-Ukrainian battalion, they're really professional troops," he related.

Exercises like the one at Camp White Eagle not only help improve relations between foreign armies, but also increase their knowledge and allows them to operate more safely and efficiently in a multinational environment like Kosovo.



Staff Sgt Mark Baugher (left) shows Capt. Darivsz Coral how to call in a nine-line medevac



Polish-Ukrainian medics dress 'wounds' on one of their soldiers as part of the exercise



# Guarding Bondsteel

*Story and Photos by  
Staff Sgt. Donald Dodson*

Staring intently from the tower, scanning the field of fire with binoculars, the soldiers stand watch in guard tower four. The radio crackles, interrupting the stillness of a warm October afternoon. These are ideal conditions for manning an LP/OP – the actual nature of the tower guard. These and others like them hold the safety of the soldiers and civilians on Camp Bondsteel in their hands. These men and women pull long, often boring shifts watching for any thing out of the ordinary. The boredom of the soldiers' shifts is broken only by periodic radio checks and the visits of the sergeant of the guard.

The nerve center of the whole operation is the Force Protection Operations Center, which is manned 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It serves as the command and control for the more than 200 soldiers that make up a shift. Force Protection controls not only the soldiers on tower guard, but also those that guard the gates and the BLAHA.

The tower guards serve as the eyes and ears for the entire perimeter of Camp Bondsteel. They are responsible for ensuring that no person attempts to cross the perimeter, including from the inside out. They constantly monitor and report all activity outside the perimeter so that the base is never caught by surprise.

Before the guards go to pull guard duty, they have to be inspected. The soldiers of the 16th Engineers perform the inspections. "They inspect our equipment and make sure we are squared away and ready for duty. They check to make sure we know our rules of engagement and the task force rules," said Sgt. Daniel Henson, a soldier from Med Falcon.

If a piece of equipment isn't up to snuff or they forget a general order, the soldier is usually given some good old-fashioned positive reinforcement training. "Push-ups. That's just something I think that the sergeant of the guard does to remind them to make sure they are squared away. It is just a reminder. If you get dropped and have to do some push-ups maybe you'll learn that stuff and then next time you've got duty you'll

remember it," explained Henson.

Specific units man each of the towers. The unit is responsible for setting up how the personnel pull the duty. Some units have them pull duty for three days, four hours on and eight hours off.

Soldiers from Task Force Med Falcon maintain tower 4. Although they have been here for only three weeks, and it is their first tower guard tour, they already sound like veteran tower guards, reciting the rules and expectations they are expected to fulfill while on duty. "We've learned quickly and got up to speed with help of the sergeant of the guard and the Task Force," said Henson.

Staff Sgt. Carlos Flores Cotos performs spot checks, making sure that all the towers and posts have proper equipment. "We just want them to take care of the equipment that is up there, and do their job — which is observe, inform and stay alert."

Flores Cotos, a forward observer with the 2/3 FA likes his job as tower guard NCOIC. As NCOIC, Flores Cotos' basic responsibility is to make sure the equipment is serviceable. Not only serviceable, but also present. "We can't afford to lose some of the equipment here because it is hard to get a hold of; radios, pyrotechnics, photo range cards and first aid kits. Once we make sure that it is present, they'll log me in and I'll continue to do my checks at the other 11 towers that are employed at this time and also both gates."

Jobs don't necessarily reflect the duty. In fact, many of them have jobs that often bear little relation to infantry actions. But most of the



*Sgt. Daniel Henson, an x-ray technician from Task Force Med Falcon, casts a keen eye out over his sector in tower 4*

troops in the towers feel it is part of being a soldier. "They always say your first duty is to soldier, but outside of that we work in the hospital," explained Sgt. Frank Grieve an LPN on duty in tower 4.

"You know the biggest thing about guard duty is that it's a reminder that we are in an environment where we need to be looking at what's outside the wire. You never know what is going to happen. They say it can change in a second," Grieve explained.

If things do change, they are prepared. All the guards come laden with a rucksack filled with equipment for most any contingency and any weather situation. The packing list is seasonal. It provides the soldiers all that they will need in the event of heightened ThreatCon or a transition from peacekeeping to high intensity conflict. The guards must be prepared at any time to assume defense of the.

If anything happened - somebody might be breaching the wire, getting too close or impeding KFOR activities - a quick reaction force would be employed. If it were just someone coming along too close to the wire, Force Protection would come with an interpreter and inform the person that they need to move away.

Pulling guard on the towers is not without its humorous moments. When the children got out of school, Force Protection frequently had to respond to the wire because the children wanted to come see the base camp. 1st Lt. Jeff Blanchard said, "I frequently saw the same young girl who had trouble keeping her herd of sheep away from the wire. One day, one of the sheep walked into the wire and was tangled. The tower called and we responded but before we arrived the animal freed itself. Unfortunately, we now had a sheep on the interior of the perimeter. The young shepherd was nervous, but the translator, Bujar Idrizi, and I thought it was a bit entertaining. We were sure we were going to have to attempt to catch the animal and throw it over the wire, but the sheep made it out on its

own before the rodeo began."

Troops also guard the BLAHA. The 2/501st mans this area. It consists of a tower and a gate providing access control. Additionally, a roving patrol continually monitors and patrols the area. Specialist Travis Ova, an aircraft sheet metalworker from D Co., 2/501st was on duty. In fact, it is his sole assignment while here in Kosovo. "It is important, so I guess everybody has to pull his or her share," he said.

One of the most difficult missions is controlling the gates. The gate guards are tasked with access control for Bondsteel. They have the immense responsibility of verifying that all personnel and vehicles are permitted to enter and are properly searched. They constantly deal with visitors for the detention facility and hospital as well as local nationals who are not aware that we will not provide help at the gate. They explain on a daily basis to local nationals how and where to do things such as; file reports with the UNMIK-P, apply for jobs at Brown and Root in Ferizaj/ Uresovac and contact civil affairs teams for their town.

The gate is manned by troops from the 2/3 FA. The personnel at the gate are responsible to ensure that all the vehicles that come into post meet the entry criteria. That means they have the right paperwork or ID to enter post. In case of any emergency they contact the Force Protection office which is manned 24-7 to get guidance.

"There is more to pulling guard duty than being in a tower, bored for a certain amount of time," explained Flores Cotos. "Troops must realize that it is up to the soldiers in the tower to do their duty so they can sleep without having to worry about anybody coming in the camp and doing damage to either personnel or equipment. It is for real. You never know what can happen. It is all up to the soldiers. We have got to be prepared and we make sure they are ready." That sure makes a lot of soldiers on Bondsteel feel safer at night.



*Staff Sgt. Carlos Flores Cotos, 2/3 FA, performs a spot check on the equipment in the tower as Sgt. Frank Grieve from Task Force Med Falcon looks on*



# Joint Russian-American exercise

Story by  
Warrant Officer Jennifer Seay  
Photos by Spc. Lorenzo Sam

During the Cold War years it was inconceivable to envision any relations between the United States and Russia much less them working side-by-side in a joint military exercise. On Sept. 26, this became a reality during a multinational training exercise when U.S. UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters transported Russian ground troops to an over-run checkpoint northeast of Kamenica.

"Our main goal was to ensure the level of our (Russian and American) cooperation between our units," said Maj. Oleg Reken, commander of the 14<sup>th</sup> Russian Tactical Group. "The idea of these exercises is to establish a coordination of control systems."

The exercise scenario began with increased tension following the deterioration of the political situation here in Kosovo. Demonstrations were prevalent with humanitarian aid convoys being attacked and smuggling running rampant. At the checkpoint some Serbs tried to smuggle goods across the boundary when a Russian BMD investigated.

A firefight ensued between the Serbs and Russian troops. The Serbs launched mortar rounds and small arms fire against the Russian positions, while the U.S. provided artillery support to their Russian compatriots. Soldiers at the observation point eventually retreated by vehicle with their wounded.

The Task Force Falcon Brigade Reconnaissance Team (BRT) and command arrived as reinforcements for the Russian position. The area was secured with the help of a Russian mortar section that arrived to lay rounds to the east and west while smoke concealed the forward movement of the BRT.

One of the challenges of the exercise was communications. Symbols were used extensively to overcome the English-Russian language barrier. An interesting twist to the wargame was the differences the U.S. and Russians had in designating



*Soldiers from the 14th Tactical Group load up in their vehicle as part of the joint Russian-American exercise*

friend and foe. The U.S. uses red to designate the foe and blue for friend. The Russians use the opposite.

Keeping the local citizenry informed was also critical. The exercise progressed full-bore, and the locals didn't need to believe another war was occurring. Colonel Alexander Kolpakou, G-2 for the Russian forces said, "The planning was very good and useful for both sides. The locals were informed about this exercise through fliers."

As the exercise progressed, the Serbs once again opened fire – this time on the advancing soldiers of the BRT. Air support, called in from both the U.S. and Russian forces, arrived to give some needed assistance to the beleaguered ground troops.

While U.S. and United Arab

Emirates (U.A.E.) AH-64 Apaches and Russian Mi-24 Hinds hit the Serb positions with a hail of rounds and rockets, and U.S. UH-60 Blackhawks provided cover fire while evacuating the wounded, the Russian Quick Reaction Force (QRF) was successfully inserted by air to establish blocking positions against any attempted Serb advancing maneuvers.

Securing all positions and effectively suppressing – and finally overcoming – the Serb forces, the combined force of U.S.-Russian soldiers claimed a joint victory over the rigors of the simulation.

The purpose of this scenario was to train for a contingency operation, which required the use of multinational forces made up of, among others, elements of Task Force Falcon and the Russian Task Force. Some of the objectives of this training exercise employed combined U.S. and Russian Tactics Techniques and Procedures (TTPs) as a combat

multiplier. It also combined Command and Control (C2) of all the forces involved to increase the synchronous, multinational capabilities available to the KFOR commander.

The use of Blackhawks, Apaches and Hinds as a combined aviation support force greatly increased the lethality and effectiveness of the overall mission. With aircraft supplementing the ground troops in both assault and medevac roles, the ground forces were able to maneuver into position in both M109A6s and squad BRT up-armored HMMWVs as the Russian QRF was air-inserted to provide the needed punch to end the confrontation.

"More of these exercises are planned for the future," said Reken. "We conduct such operations all the time ... such as joint patrols and joint operations. The KFOR commander asked me about my point of view of these exercises, and I give a high estimate of all American officers and soldiers!"



*KFOR Commander Lt. General Juan Ortuno, right, watches the briefing with interest, as Major General Kenneth Bowra looks on*



*Major Thomas S. Fisher goes over the scenario for the operation*



# Injured boy helped at Bondsteel hospital

Story and Photos by  
Staff Sgt. Donald Dodson

**D**riving through the already narrow streets of small villages and towns can make you wince as children crowd the roadside, waving and shouting, "NATO! NATO!" For one little Albanian boy, being close to the road proved to be unlucky. On Sept 14, a civilian truck near the town of Hani-i-Elezit struck the boy. The truck driver felt something and stopped the truck to look. Under the truck he found nine-year-old Sammir Buqi.

Buqi was brought to Camp Bondsteel where his condition was assessed. It was determined that he had severe injury to his right arm that crushed all the bones around the elbow joint and essentially took all the skin and a fair amount of muscle off of the arm itself.

The first thing the doctors did was clean up the injured area as much as possible and attached an external fixator (a device with pins and a bar that keep the arm immobilized and the elbow aligned properly). Once that was accomplished, he was released to allow the injury to heal and stabilize. He came back to have the wound dressed on two separate occasions.

Sammir's injury occurred just prior to the arrival of the new hospital unit and it was at this time that his new attending physician, Maj. Edgar A Fike, MD, a reservist with the 313<sup>th</sup> Hospital Unit (Surgical) out of Springfield, MO. decided that Sammir's wounds had healed enough to definitively fix his arm.

"We went in to put the bones together as well as we could. The problem was that he had a really significant crush injury. Essentially, the truck tire had probably gone right over the bone. So they were in very small pieces. Instead of using screws and things like that, we actually had to sew the bone fragments in place. There was nothing else that we could do," Fike explained.

Following that operation, they removed the external fixator and again cleaned the wound, which was healing very well. Just recently, he had another operation in which skin, taken from the little boy's thighs, was



*Sammir Buqi smiles even after a particularly painful skin graft operation*

grafted to the injured area, covering up the wound.

Although it does sound painful, the doctors were impressed by how well Sammir did.

"He's done really well. He's a very tough kid," said Fike. "For the most part I have found that the Albanians and Serbians ... they live a different lifestyle than the Americans. They tolerate pain significantly better and they don't complain very much. They are very stoic."

A recent examination of the skin graft showed good progress. "It looks like 90 percent of the skin graft is going to take which is very good. Normally it is in the range of 50 to 80 percent. They will continue to bring him back to change the dressings and do some more bone work," explained Fike.

His good behavior and warm smile made him a hit with all the staff. "He seems to be doing real well. He gets scared being in the hospital," said Staff Sgt. Rhonda Kaffka, a nursing student here on her first deployment. With three boys of her own, Kaffka can certainly relate.

"We've grown attached to him. He's a good little guy. He is real cooperative and his family has been cooperative. And, it is hard because you relate to your own children. When he cries it kind of hurts your heart. You cry too," she related.

One of many people who work with Sammir, Kaffka enjoys her time with him. It helps her when she misses her own children. "We show him pictures of things and we say what it is and he mimics back what we said, then the next time we show him he says it in English. We play little games and he plays with the toys. He is just like any other little kid; play goes beyond the language barrier," responded Kaffka.

Sammir's family has kept a constant watch over the little boy whenever he has to come to the hospital. His father, Reshat Buqi, watches over him as he sleeps peacefully, a pile of toys at his feet. You can see a whisper of concern in his eyes, but he is effusive in his feelings towards the hospital staff and KFOR. With an expression that conveys far more than words, he explained his gratitude for the work the staff has done, "To all the staff that is working here I am grateful just because the arm that was needed to be amputated is saved now and this is my greatest desire. I appreciate the work and it was something miraculous that they did here." He went on to say that he wished that there was some gift, some token of appreciation he could give, but nothing equals the gratitude in a loving parent's eyes.

Sammir isn't the only child to get treatment at Camp Bondsteel. There are other children, too. A 15 year-old boy, Vladomir, needed an appendectomy and another 15 year old had his

finger amputated from an injury with an axe while cutting wood. Kaffka enjoys seeing them when they come back for a dressing change. "They have all done real well and are eager to learn English. Vladomir drew a picture of a car for us. I have that and I take their pictures. They all stop in and say 'Hi'."

Kids aren't the only ones that receive treatment at Camp Bondsteel. Besides KFOR soldiers and civilians, local civilians get treated. To determine whether an individual receives treatment or not, the hospital has its own Medical Rules of Engagement: If it saves life, limb or eyesight, the hospital will treat the individual.

This is an issue because the native system is not yet up to full speed. So they can't completely take care of some of the injuries the hospital sees. "Once they come into Bondsteel," explained Fike, "we are stuck with that moral and ethical issue of how much we can do. Because, for the most part, the system we have here is probably better than the system that they have available for them in a local hospital. So we have to decide what we can and cannot do, realizing that our real mission here is supposed to be supporting the KFOR troops. And that has been a little bit of an issue although the command staff and the higher headquarters have been very understanding, realizing that being a physician you want to take care of the patients no matter who those patients are. So we've had pretty good backing from them on that. We've been able to do the things that we thought we needed to do to care for our patients."

It is exactly that philosophy that has bettered the lives of many people in Kosovo. It has allowed a war-torn province to begin anew - to get a second chance at a healthy life. It is those efforts that will allow little Sammir Buqi to shake hands and high-five KFOR soldiers again.



*Attending physician Maj. Edgar Fike, MD. discusses Sammir's condition with his father, Reshat Buqi*



# Ensuring a safe and secure. . . impact area



*Story and photos by*

*Spc. Derek M. Smith*

**A** Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicle rolls through the brush-filled and hilly terrain of its designated course on the Ramjane range. The flashing rage of the machine's 7.62mm coaxial

machinegun splatters the area to rout the enemy from hiding. Its 25mm cannon comes to bear on its target and furiously erupts on the mock enemy with the precision of practice and intent of a crew that has rehearsed and studied to bring it to the nearest level of perfection that one

could hope of achieving.

In the midst of the Bradley crew's operations, troops would deploy from the haven of the fighting machine to the dangers of conflict outside. Illumination rounds and artillery fire needed to be called in to support their operation. With a faith

and trust in their artillery support, the radio squawks to life with the request.

Precision and coordination are key elements to military operations, even peacekeeping efforts in the province of Kosovo. The U.S. KFOR troops in MNB East work diligently to ensure the safety of all of its members, as well as that of the local populace and environment.

With live-fire again approved on the Ramjane range, strong steps have been taken to prevent any mishaps that may occur with the use of the dangerous tools, which the well-trained forces of KFOR employ. In the desire to keep the demons of chance at bay, the U.S. peacekeepers have been working harder to conduct their operations safely.

An often overlooked member of these precautions is the forward observer. Their gaze washes over the scene to cleanse the area of the filth of error or misfortune. They act to ensure the safety of soldiers, civilians and environment.

"We are here to observe the rounds to make sure that they land in the safety box (a designated margin to protect all parties from harm) and make any corrections that need to be made as far as the impact zone," said Pvt. Scott Clark, a radio/telephone operator for 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 3<sup>rd</sup> Field Artillery Regiment. He and his



*A Bradley Fighting Vehicle fires at a target during a live-fire exercise on the Ramjane range*

*A Bradley  
offered at*



companions, who are commonly referred to as "fisters", are called in on all range operations as an extra precaution and to assist the accuracy of artillery support. "We basically watch over the safety area and make sure it's clear at all times. A fister's job is to call in fire but also to direct that fire, not only to destroy enemies, but to keep friendly forces out of the impact area."

"(The training units) call us on their maneuver message and we'll relay that call for fire back to the fire batteries," explained 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Andrew Visser, a fire support officer for 2-3 FA. "They're the ones that actually put the rounds down range. Once the rounds are in the air, we have to observe the impact area to make sure the rounds landed safely within the boundaries."

"The ammunition we're shooting is training ammunition – concrete rounds," furthered Visser. "That's one less thing to worry about. You don't have that bursting effect or shrapnel. You just have to worry about getting it in the proper impact area."

Visser continued to explain that environmental concerns were also paramount in the safety precautions taken by the units operating here. Hot metal has a most nasty tendency to start fires when given the chance.

"During the summer months, everything's dry," said Visser. "When we shoot illumination rounds, for instance, we need to be sure that they burn out in the air. If they burn on the ground, there's a possibility that they'll cause a brush fire."

"Of course, with the weather we've been having, it's not been a problem," laughed Visser as he lifted his boot where large clumps of sticky orange mud clung to it like a leeches.

Visser finished by explaining that the peacekeeping mission here brings many added duties to those typically carried out at home station. There is less time for continuous training, which makes every moment of prac-

tice very important.

"Our main focus is keeping the peace," said Visser. "At the same time, though, the people at Task Force Falcon recognize that it's important to maintain our fighting edge. That's why we try to integrate in more training as much as possible."

The force compensates for this slight disadvantage by overwhelming itself with an unbridled focus and enthusiasm towards the jobs that they have trained long and hard at. These U.S. KFOR soldiers have deployed to Kosovo trained, confident and fluent in their jobs. They have provided a safe and secure environment for the people of the province, as well as themselves.



*A Bradley Fighting Vehicle fires while advancing on a target during a live-fire exercise on the Ramjane range*



*A Bradley Fighting Vehicle maneuvers for a better firing position, taking full advantage of the targets offered at Ramjane range during the exercise*



*Pvt. Scott Clark, a radio/telephone operator for 2/3 FA, observes a Bradley Fighting Vehicle live-fire exercise on the Ramjane range*



# MNB-E/TMK secure children's future

Story and photos by  
Spc. Derek M. Smith

It is said that children are our most valuable resource. The boys and girls of Kosovo have now started a new school year and look forward to continuing their country's progression toward a peaceful and safe future for all Kosovars. The forces within Multi-National Brigade East are taking measures to ensure that all the children receive the education that they need.

Malcolm Forbes once wrote, "Education's purpose is to replace an empty mind with an open one." With this concept, every step possible in securing the children's schooling is being addressed.

In an ultimate show of unity, forces from MNB East came together to clear and secure the schoolyard of the joint school in Kamenica. The project, which involved U.S. and Russian forces from the sector, the Kosovo Protection Corps (TMK), and Kosovar Serb volunteers, was the ultimate display of concern for the future and education of the children of this rebuilding land.

The endeavor began on August 31, when the TMK and Serb volunteers began clearing foliage and debris in the schoolyard. The project continued smoothly each weekend after school started September 1.

"What we have here is one of the few areas in Kosovo where Serbian children and Albanian children will actually be going to school together," explained Lt. Col. Jeff Ingram, chief of the Joint Implementation Commission for MNB East. He stated that the forces here were to clear the area of the school and erect a fence to provide more security.

"We called upon the TMK Regional Task Force 6 to assist in putting the fence in," said Ingram. "We advised and gave instruction. They did most of the labor. When you show the TMK members once, they have it down."



TMK members assemble a section of a fence at the school. The TMK worker at right looks through a piece of darkened glass to keep potentially harmful light from the arc welder from damaging his eyes

Ingram stressed the importance of the TMK's involvement here. It was a further show of the civil protection organization's commitment to rebuilding Kosovo. "They are looking to the future of Kosovo, versus the past."

The U.S. forces provided administrative and supply assistance, equipment and welding training, as well as perimeter security. Soldiers from the Russian 13<sup>th</sup> Tactical Group assisted with building security as the project progressed outside. All parties involved approached this undertaking with an undeniable vigor. They expressed excitement over the importance of the securing of the school, which serves as a strong symbol of unity and commitment toward the future of this rebuilding land.

"We're working together," said

Sgt. Thaddous Carr, NCOIC of the service and recovery shop, B Company, 501<sup>st</sup> Forward Support Battalion. His unit trained and assisted the TMK in welding the fence together. "We're making sure that they're doing everything to standard and making sure all the equipment is functioning properly."

The area was cleared with a quickness and thoroughness typically unseen in such seemingly unrewarding duties. Even the arduous task could not dampen the workers' spirits nor keep them from their ultimate prize. With a wipe of the brow and a smile, each acknowledged his or her conviction to the project.

"This is for our children," emphasized Hajrush Kurtas, commander of the 364<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the TMK, RTF 6. "There is a lot of work to do here. We will always be available to help the people of Kosovo. Like the soldiers of KFOR, we are ready at any moment."

"We do our best for the people," Kurtas continued. "We can see we have KFOR to help us, and we are getting great support from the community. The people have shown that the TMK is welcome here. We want to do our part for the safety and security for all Kosovars."

The schoolyard mission carried through the month toward the approaching days of October. The

exuberance of the laborers never faltered as they continued with their work. On Sept. 30, the task reached its culmination as the bulk of the fence was assembled and welded together, enclosing the area in a shining perimeter of steel.

The on-looking children who visited each workday greeted all of the laborers with smiles of friendship and excitement, watching, in near-fascination, the improvements arising around their school. They came each day to witness the machine-like precision that abounded as each facet of the operation was methodically plotted for the perimeter's new fence.

"I wanted to get involved," stated 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Connie Brown, special projects officer for HHC, Task Force Falcon. She asked to be involved upon hearing of the project and helped in securing the materials needed to complete it. As she talked with the children who would attend the school, her convictions only seemed to increase. "This is important."

These children now have a safer environment in which to embrace their future, and that of their province, through education. All of this is a result of the efforts of a unified effort from the TMK, some Serbian-Kosovar volunteers, and U.S. and Russian KFOR soldiers.

"Ah! What would the world be to us if the children were no more? We should dread the desert behind us worse than the dark before." — Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.



Hajrush Kurtas, commander of 364<sup>th</sup> Bgde, TMK RTF 6 (left); Shaban Shala, commander of TMK RTF 6 (center); and Lt. Col. Jeff Ingram, Chief of the Joint Implementation Commission of MNB East (right), discuss the fencing project of the joint school in Kamenica



# Democracy in action: Soldiers vote far from home

Story by Capt. Laura Kenney

Soldiers obey their commander-in-chief regardless of who holds the position, but, like every other citizen of the United States, they have the right - every four years - to vote in the election that decides who holds that supreme authority. This right/obligation/duty, call it what you will, holds true even if the soldier is serving thousands of miles and oceans away from the land where the majority of his fellow countrymen will be casting their ballots.

Far from the bustling streets of northeastern cities, or the grandeur of the mountains of Alaska or Colorado, or the golden heat and sun of southern and western beaches, or the rolling plains of the mid-west - and definitely not 'back on the block', wherever that block is - American soldiers in Kosovo are still helping to determine who the next President of their nation will be.

A mechanism as simple as the absentee ballot lets the deployed soldier exercise his democratic right to vote for who will govern. The first step to receiving an absentee ballot can be taken in a variety of ways. The Legal Assistance Office at Camp Bondsteel was the source many soldiers turned to for guidance and practical assistance.

Capt. Joe Raterman, Chief, Client Services, and Sgt. John Philibert, Legal NCO, had a virtual campaign to encourage soldiers to sign up. Flyers were posted all over Bondsteel as early as July, informing soldiers about the absentee ballot system, and detailing the different ways of obtaining one. Soldiers could go in person to the Legal Assistance Office and fill out a form,



*Sgt. John Philibert assists a soldier in filling out his absentee ballot paperwork. The soldier then sent a ballot back to the States, thereby registering their vote*

which Raterman or Philibert would then notarize and mail for them, or they could register on line.

Raterman said Philibert's dedication to enabling soldiers to exercise their right to vote went far beyond posting flyers, and notarizing signatures.

"Sgt. Philibert took the initiative, and went to each and every remote site where there were American soldiers, hand-carrying forms out to them, and witnessing their signatures. He wanted to make sure that each and every soldier of the Task Force had the opportunity to vote. I credit him directly with the 261 soldiers who signed up through our

office, and there's no way of counting the many who've undoubtedly signed up via the Internet."

Sgt. Philibert, responding to his boss's praise, said simply, "If a soldier can't come in to register, we'll take the registration to him, no matter where he is."

Some soldiers registered for their ballots before deploying. When Philibert contacted the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 237<sup>th</sup> Regiment, 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division, serving in Vitina, the response was, "Thanks, but the whole battalion registered before we ever left Ft. Campbell!"

There's no way of telling exactly how many members of Task

Force Falcon will vote or have voted in this year's presidential election, but Raterman and Philibert 'guesstimate' that the number could be in the thousands.

"Well, it just makes sense - we're over here defending and encouraging democracy — all the more reason to care about and engage in the democracy we as Americans are already blessed to enjoy," said Philibert, summing up.



## General checks out Public Affairs

Brigadier General Larry D. Gottardi, the new Chief of Public Affairs, visited troops in Mogilla while observing military journalists and broadcasters from the 326th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment performing their jobs. The 326th, a Reserve unit from Reading PA, is responsible for publishing the *Falcon Flier*, submitting stories appearing on AFN and providing public affairs for Task Force Falcon. His visit was part of a tour of Public Affairs units in the Balkans. He is seen here during an interview taped as part of an AFN Broadcast.



# Wood delivery warms hearts and hearths

Story and Photos by  
Staff Sgt. Chuck Joseph

**N**ext to food and water, wood is the lifeblood of Kosovo. Rough-built stucco and clay-tile shelters dot the hillsides and smother the cities of this rustic Balkan province. Firewood warms the majority of these homes through the bitter cold of winter. Shortages of life's basic needs abound, and firewood is no exception.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 37<sup>th</sup> Armored Regiment was determined to prepare their area of operation for the onslaught of nasty weather. The unit assisted the residents of the area with home winterization and realized the local Kosovars needed help procuring wood. Patrols kept running into people who were illegally cutting wood, and the residents often asked for help with the shortages.

The commander of the 1/37<sup>th</sup> HHC, Capt. Mike Bramblett, took on the task of providing firewood for as many of the citizens as he could. The peacekeeping mission is quite different from fighting a war, and as the captain soon learned, working with non-government organizations is essential to providing aid.

"I've never worked with aid organizations before," said Bramblett. "It took about a month to get a grasp on how it really works. We've provided a lot of aid through a lot of different organizations."

The most recent part of that aid was 1300 cubic meters of firewood and woodcutting permits for 400 families. The money for this aid came from International Orthodox Christian Charities, one of the NGOs that Bramblett has learned to work with.

"The aid organizations need help. It's kind of a right hand/left hand situation," said Bramblett. "We're out there in the towns and villages, so we know what the needs are and where those needs are."

Bramblett handled all the logis-



Capt. Mike Bramblett and Sgt. James J. Reed lead a firewood-laden convoy past the Kosovar-Serbian village of Koreteste to the 1/37<sup>th</sup> outpost on September 22

tics and procurement planning for the wood delivery, and the IOCC provided the money to buy the wood and permits. The IOCCs representative in Kosovo, Nathan Koeshall, was on hand for the first delivery of wood and was glad his organization could help.

"I'm here to help stabilize minority communities for the short term," said Koeshall. "We wanted to get help to these people before the winter. Wood for heat was one of those gaps in the aid being funneled in, so we decided to concentrate on wood." The

organization sent Koeshall to Kosovo with \$45,000 to provide immediate aid, and they are assessing future

**"They need this wood. Otherwise, we would have people freezing to death this winter. We could do just the peacekeeping mission. But we're here getting them wood, and doors and windows for their houses. Then, we'll win their hearts. Stuff like this is why I'm proud and glad to be here."**

**-- Sgt. James J. Reed**

projects. After purchasing the wood and permits, the IOCC had money left over and used it to purchase school supplies.

The extra money was possible because of the low price negotiated by Bramblett. Bejtulah Keikil is a local businessman, and part of his business is the sale of firewood. He owns a Gnjilane business that has provided many supplies to KFOR, and was glad to

price of the wood."

Keikil added that his company is "... A multi-ethnic company working towards a multi-ethnic Kosovo." Bramblett advised that he was glad to do business with the company for this reason.

Part of the deal was for Keikil's company to deliver the wood to sites throughout the 1/37<sup>th</sup> area. The wood was stockpiled and distributed to the most needy of the communities. Sgt. James J. Reed, HHC platoon mechanic and commander's driver, assisted the commander throughout the project and felt a sense of pride on the day of the first delivery.

"They need this wood," said Reed. "Otherwise, we would have people freezing to death this winter. We could do just the peacekeeping mission. But we're here getting them wood, and doors and windows for their houses," Reed added. "Then, we'll win their hearts. Stuff like this is why I'm proud and glad to be here."

Infantry and artillery officers and soldiers are learning peacekeeping on the ground. Some officers, like Bramblett, are learning how to deal with the local citizenry and non-government organizations. These new skills are contributing to the safety and security of all Kosovars -- which is the unit's mission.

As the wind blows cold and the snow accumulates on the mountains of Kosovo, its citizens will huddle around wood-burning stoves, telling stories and remembering -- remembering the helpful hand of the peacekeepers of the 1/37<sup>th</sup>.



Albanian, Croatian and Roma workers labor together for the "multi-national" company that supplied firewood to the 1/37<sup>th</sup> Armored. The wood was delivered to poor families in the 1/37<sup>th</sup> area of operation

give KFOR a price that was \$10 less per cubic meter than the usual rate.

"KFOR is helping Kosovars, no matter what nationality they are," said Keikil. "My company doesn't differentiate between nationalities, and we have done much business with KFOR. For those reasons, we lowered the



# 432 CA helps Kosovar Serbs look for lost loved ones

Story and photos by  
Spc. Derek M. Smith

There comes a time, I fear, that the jewels cease to sparkle, when the gold loses its luster, when the throne room becomes a prison, and all that is left is a father's love for his child." — John Milius.

Healing can be a slow process, especially when the healing in question is of the heart. Thousands of loved ones are still missing from the scarred land of Kosovo. Many of these people may never be found. As families here cope with the absence of their kin, they still look to find the answers to their missing kin's fate. They seek to eliminate their doubts and questions in the hope of finding some solace from their emotional distress.

Members of the 432<sup>nd</sup> Civil Affairs Battalion from Green Bay, Wis., transported a group of Kosovar Serbs from Silovo to the town of Gracanica on September 28, in the hopes that the whereabouts of their lost loved ones could be discovered.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) opened the doors of its identification project for the Serb population for the first time this day. The service presented photographs of clothing and personal effects of persons found and unidentified throughout the country.

"The bodies that these items are related to are not identified," said Rupert White, an identification officer for the OSCE identification project. "We have had people who have recognized items of clothing that they think belong to people that they know. What we are now doing is to speak to them to get more information on the people that they want to find and then we can compare the information with the autopsy report."

"We can see if we can make a match," White further explained. "Once we are sure and once the people are sure that an identification has been made, families will then be able to get their relatives back to be buried where and when they wish."

Most of the photos of personal items that were presented were from exhumed bodies found in mass graves. Albanians and Serbs alike have lost many of their loved ones during the conflict throughout this corner of the world. Now Serbs and Albanians alike, must put their lives back together as they search for their lost family members and forge new lives in this rebuilding land.

The local community center was filled with the grim reminders of the atrocities that ravaged Kosovo not so long ago. The reality of the horrors inflicted here deepened as one viewed photograph after photograph of clothing, eyeglasses and other personal effects, which had been on these unfortunate people whose destiny led them to a mass grave. No smiles or laughter were to fill the center this day. The solemn atmosphere of the moderately sized build-



Kosovar Serbs from Silovo thank Major Cindy Hermesen (second from right), a team leader for the 432 CA, and interpreter Mario Bukna (far right) for their escort to Gracanica, September 28, to attend the OSCE identification project's service in the hopes of locating their missing family members

ing weighed heavy upon those who entered in the hopes of bringing their suffering closer to an end by learning the fates of their missing relatives and friends.

The 432<sup>nd</sup> CA became involved when they were approached by members of the Serb community of Silovo and were asked for their assistance in reaching the event. The U.S. KFOR soldiers were quick to respond. They arranged to take the families to try to find the fate of their kin.

"It's a good thing to do," said Maj. Cindy Hermesen, a team leader for the 432 CA. She expressed her sympathy and understanding of the situation of lost loved ones and wanted to help. "I would certainly want to know (the fate of my family members)."

"We escorted them here to try to identify their loved ones," explained Sgt. Kyle Indra, an assistant team leader for the 432 CA. "A lot of them don't have vehicles. They have no way of getting here."

"I feel pretty good that we're able to help them provide something they can't do for themselves," Indra continued. "It's kind of a double-edged sword, though. You hope that they can find some closure to their loved ones, but you hope maybe they don't find it so there's some hope there."

The crowd was a hurricane of different emotions. Many who came to the site would leave with no more knowledge than they arrived with. For others, the search had seemingly come to an end. All that was left for them to do was make arrangements to bring their deceased family members

home for their final rest. Others, still, were angry with their fruitless efforts to locate their kin, while some visitors left even more distraught over their inability to locate their absent kin.

Tears flowed as free as rain as eyes told each person's story as surely as if it were read from his or her biography. Men and women exited the building with no luck in learning what had happened to those whom they sought. Yet, they couldn't bring themselves to leave. They stood outside in the warming September sun, lost in thought or conversation. Many re-entered the building in the hope that they had missed a photo somewhere, and that would be the one with the answers to their quest.

The group from Silovo met with disappointment that day, as well. Each failed to find a clue to the fate

of those they searched for. Their discontent was evident, yet it only strengthened their resolve as they met their KFOR companions with smiles of warm gratitude.

"I found nothing here," said Tasich Zhivana. Her son was missing for over 16 months, and she has searched for him every day since he disappeared. She reaffirmed her commitment to learn his fate as she prepared to continue her search. "I pray to God every day. I still have hope."

The pilgrims from Silovo may have returned to their town a bit disheartened, perhaps. They gained no knowledge of the whereabouts of their loved ones. Yet, in seeking their lost family members, they realized that they found a sympathetic and friendly shoulder, clad in Army green.



An OSCE worker receives information from some Kosovar Serb women who were searching for lost loved ones during OSCE's identification project in Gracanica, September 28



# Hispanic heritage celebration

Story and photos by  
Spc. Michael Nowinski

A large group of soldiers from many different ethnic backgrounds looked on with great interest on Sept. 30 as Hispanic heritage guest speaker Christine Trujillo described how Hispanic music evolved to reflect the changes in the culture. "Music is a great connector. It archives everything we bring to the table through lyrics and sounds," Trujillo said about her presentation, which integrated a history of music from pre-Hispanic times through contemporary times. A slide show about the different artists, and their contributions to the culture, enhanced her narration.

The presentation at the Camp Bondsteel Theater was only the start of a whole day of events that marked the end of Hispanic heritage month. After the presentation, a fiesta was held at the MWR tent in Southtown that included piñatas, a hog roast, Hispanic foods, games and Latin Dance night that ended the day.

"I think it's great! I'm enjoying the music, I'm enjoying the program, and I'm enjoying my heritage," said Staff Sgt. Armando Celaya.

Soldiers who attended the event thought it was a great idea and that there should be more like it. "It allowed other people to know about our Spanish heritage. She (Trujillo) found a very good example (the music), the way it evolved and how other cultures help to develop each other's music. More people should come to these events, they'll find more to cultures than what they hear or what they've seen from other people. There's a lot more to see and a lot more to learn," said Staff Sgt. Carlos Flores-Cotto about the event.

Celebrating Hispanic Heritage month is part of the U.S. Army's way of enlightening soldiers to the various traditions and the many backgrounds that make the Army the organization it is today.

"It's all part of diversifying the Army so everyone understands the different cultures, they understand



Christine Trujillo talks to soldiers about hispanic female scholarships during her visit to Camp Bondsteel for Hispanic Heritage month

each other better and basically helps us to work and relate better as an army team. A lot of soldiers don't get to listen to things of Hispanic heritage, typically we get caught up in the run of the mill - working everyday - and we don't get to look at the soldiers to our left and right," said Task Force Falcon EO advisor, Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Michael Lynch.

Hispanic heritage month is one of eight heritage months celebrated by the Army. Other ethnic months include Asian-Pacific Islander month, Black history month and October's Native American month.

Being away from home, whether at Bondsteel or central region, can be a lonely time and events like these are a great service to soldiers' morale.

"These soldiers really miss their families and I hope I brought a little bit of home back to them through the presentation" said Trujillo.

## Celebrating a Jewish tradition



Chaplain (LTC) Avi S. Weiss sounds the Shofar, or ram's horn, as part of the Rosh Hashana service held at the Southtown Chapel on Camp Bondsteel October 1, to bring in the Jewish new year

## Christmas Mailing Deadline

To Ensure your letters and packages to the states are delivered to the United States before Christmas, mail them no later than these dates:

<b>16 November</b>	<b>SAM Parcels</b>
<b>30 November</b>	<b>PAL Parcels</b>
<b>7 December</b>	<b>Priority Parcels</b>
<b>7 December</b>	<b>First Class Letters</b>

*Express Mail is not available from Kosovo*

**Questions? Call 781-3114 or 781-3117**



# A brief history of Halloween

*Spc. Rebecca F. Deuel, IAD PAO*

In today's culture, the word Halloween stirs up images of children in costumes ranging from the fantastic to the most horrific, going door-to-door, trick-or-treating. Jack o'Lanterns lit orange with big eyes and a smile of crooked teeth, ghosts, witches, monsters and scary stories dance in many of our heads.

Halloween is an old tradition, dating far back to the days of the ancient Celts, Romans, and Druid priests. Originally a pagan festival, it marked the end of summer and of the final harvest of the year when the stores of provisions for winter were stockpiled. It was called Samhain (sow' an), La Samon, and Feast of the Sun, a ritual holiday of the Celts in ancient Ireland and Scotland. During this solar festival, all fires across the land and in households were extinguished, and only the fires of the druids were kept burning. The next morning, all the fires of the land were relit from the druids' holy fires to begin the New Year.

The ancient Romans celebrated the holiday of Feralia. It was believed that this was a day to give rest and peace to the dearly departed through sacrifices and prayer. The holiday was, however, celebrated on Feb. 21, which marked the end of the Roman year — very different than that of the ancient Celts.

Both the ancient Celts and Romans believed that this celebrated day was the only time of the year that the spirits of the dead could be communicated with easily. They believed that the dead roamed freely amongst the living, seeking rest, lost loves and families, and companionship during the short period that they could manifest, so close to the ones they loved in life.

During the 7<sup>th</sup> century, Pope Boniface IV introduced All Saint's Day, celebrated on May 13, to replace the pagan festivals of the ancients. Later, Gregory III changed the date to November 1, thus giving us the modern day of All Saint's Day, or All Soul's Day, which is celebrated after the Oct. 31 holiday of Halloween.

Still, some of the ancient traditions have survived into modern times. Folks believe that souls of the dead still roam freely, and that the Devil, witches and spirits stalk the land during this, their peak of power.

The "Dumb Supper" has survived into the modern world, too. This feast is for the spirits on Halloween Eve. Plates loaded with food and drink are set outside the door during the night, and red and white candles are set about. Stories are still told of people who pass through a portal into the "otherworld", and return to tell their fantastic tales.

In some parts of Ireland and Scotland, extinguishing one's hearth fire, and relighting it from the festival bonfire, celebrated Samhain. Folks still believe that it is a time for ridding themselves of weaknesses, such as the slaughter of weak farm animals that are unlikely to survive the winter. Cakes are still baked in many homes



as an offering to the souls of the dead.

The delightful custom of trick-or-treating can be traced back to Scotland and Ireland as well. During Samhain, it was the practice of the Irish peasants to go door-to-door, collecting money, bread, cheese, eggs, apples, nuts and other food-stuffs. This was done in preparation of a festival known as St. Columb Kill. Scottish peasants begged offerings in exchange for promises and blessings of prosperity and protection against bad luck upon one's home. Very different from today's kids on your doorstep singing, "Trick or treat! Smell my feet! Give me something good to eat!"

Finally, we cannot forget the toothily grinning and eerie Jack

o'Lantern. Surviving Irish folk stories tell of a man named Jack, a hotheaded town drunkard, who made a bargain with the Devil. When Jack realized that he was about to die one night, he begged the Devil for just one more drink, and the Devil agreed to it. Jack had no money for the drink, so he asked the Devil to take the shape of a sixpence. And so the Devil did. Jack seized the coin, and shoved it into his wallet, which had a crosshatch on it. The Devil raged at Jack, but Jack made the Devil swear that if he let him out, the Devil would not bother him for another year. The Devil again agreed.



Both went on their separate ways for a year.

The next Halloween, the Devil

appeared to Jack again. Jack was not eager to die, and conned the Devil into climbing an apple tree to get Jack an apple. When the Devil was up in the tree, Jack carved a cross on the tree trunk, trapping the Devil again. The Devil howled from the tree and promised Jack that he would not be bothered for ten years if Jack let him out of the tree. Jack insisted on never being bothered again, for the rest of his life. And so, the Devil agreed to this, and was released.

A year later, Jack's body could no longer keep up with Jack's drinking, and so he died. When he tried to enter Heaven, he could not get in because of his meanness during life. Jack then tried to get into Hell, but the Devil was still angry with him, and refused to let him in. The Devil did, however, toss Jack a piece of burning, glowing coal to help light his way in limbo. Jack put the coal into a turnip, carved out a few holes to let the light out, and it became known as the Jack o'Lantern. On Halloween, if you look closely, you can still see Jack's flame burning as he searches for a home.

When the Irish came to America, they had no turnips to use for the light festival during Halloween. They did have pumpkins, and the Irish immigrants decided that it would be a grand, and wonderfully larger, substitute for the turnip. It was the Irish immigrants that made the pumpkin an essential part of the Halloween celebration ever since.


**October Movie Schedule**  
**Camp Bondsteel theater**


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1st show starts 1930  
2nd show starts 2130  
**October 15 through 31**

<p>Mon. Oct. 16, <b>MWR Double "S"</b></p> <p>Tue. Oct. 17, 1930 <b>Grease</b> 2130 <b>Boys &amp; Girls</b></p> <p>Wed. Oct. 18, 1930 <b>MALCOLM X</b></p> <p>Thur. Oct. 19, 1930 <b>OMEGA CODE</b> 2130 <b>X-MEN</b></p> <p>Fri. Oct. 20, 1930 <b>Top's - N - Blue</b></p> <p>Sat. Oct. 21, 1930 <b>Nutty Professor II:</b> 2130 <b>The Klumps</b> <i>Scary Movie</i></p> <p>Sun. Oct. 22, 1930 <b>The Beach</b> 2130 <i>Amplifiers Don't Here</i></p> <p>Mon. Oct. 23, 1930 <b>Boiler Room</b> 2130 <b>Dogma</b></p>	<p>Tue. Oct. 24, 1930 <b>MWR Patty Booker</b></p> <p>Wed. Oct. 25, 1930 <i>Scary Movie</i> 2130 <b>Nutty Professor II:</b> <b>The Klumps</b></p> <p>Thur. Oct. 26, 1930 <b>POKEMON 2000</b> 2130 <b>Center Stage</b></p> <p>Fri. Oct. 27, <b>Bazaar</b> Sat. Oct. 28, <b>Bazaar</b> Sun. Oct. 29, <b>Bazaar</b></p> <p>Mon. Oct. 30, 1930 <i>Coyote Ugly</i> 2130 <b>Spiral Chouhous</b></p> <p>Tue. Oct. 31, 1930 <b>The Beach</b> 2130 <i>Coyote Ugly</i></p>
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# Bushmasters: Standing guard over religion

*The church of Mogille/Mogila is surrounded by fighting positions to help ensure its safety*

## Story and Photos

**Spc. Gary Goodman**

The village of Mogille/Mogila is home to one of the many Serb churches under KFOR protection. The church sits on top of a hill that emerges from the center of the village, surrounded on all sides by fighting positions, manned by the soldiers of B Co. 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon, 2/327 Infantry.

"Our primary mission is to provide a safe and secure environment for the village of Mogille/Mogila, and to guard the church here," said 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Justin Cook, platoon leader for 2/327 "Bushmasters".

The platoon is responsible for maintaining the security of the church, as well as conducting routine patrols in the village. "Mogille/Mogila is a unique town. It's split 60

percent Albanian, 40 percent Serb, which makes it a little more interesting," said Cook.

According to Cook, there have been no threats of violence against the church since his unit began providing for its security. Every Sunday, the church caretaker rings the bell, and the villagers make their way to the church in small groups, kiss the feet of the statues inside, light candles, and practice their faith. The church is also opened for holiday celebrations.

"The folks around here are very nice. They treat us with total respect. Sometimes they offer us some coffee or tea, or shelter when it's raining," said Pfc. Louis Martinez, and infantryman with the 2/327.

Even though the villagers are

kind to the soldiers, they still maintain situational awareness at all times. They must in an unpredictable environment such as Kosovo. But, it's impossible to watch the entire village at all times. The night of September 2, two bombs exploded in the village. One destroyed a Serb home, the other was planted in an alley and went off 10 minutes later, which was thought to be a booby trap designed to kill people responding to the first explosion. With violent acts like that taking place in the mixed community, the platoon has to stay on its toes to maintain security.

"We stay alert for any changes in the environment, and anything suspicious. Right now our personal security is high," said Martinez.

The living quarters of 2/327 are cement buildings located next to the church, with cots for the soldiers to sleep on, and wooden shelving for

the soldiers to store their gear.

Each squad has opportunities to relax from the rigors of patrol and guard duty. They have TV's for the soldiers to watch to unwind, and a set of weights located outside behind the church for the "Bushmasters" to work out with. The squads take turns rotating every day to Camp Bondsteel to have a day of downtime, while the other three squads pull guard and patrol duties. This gives them the opportunity to pick things up at the PX, visit the MWR or relax at the cappuccino bar.

"We feel pretty fortunate to be out here. We're enjoying our mission. Our guys do very well in the village, and have built a rapport with the locals," said Cook.



*Spc. Ildeardo Bejarano and Pfc. Charles Allen, infantrymen with 2/327, patrol the streets of Mogille/Mogila*



*The village of Mogille/Mogila as seen through the sandbags and camouflage netting of a fighting position*